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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REPORT - INDIAN MEDIA OPINION ON
U.S. SECRETARY CONDOLEEZZA RICE'S VISIT TO INDIA, OCTOBER
4, 2008

11. Begin summary: U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's October 4 visit to New Delhi was widely labeled by the Indian media as her victory lap, with expectations that the 123 Agreement would be inked. The October 5 coverage was generally straightforward, reflecting a clear sense of disappointment that the visit ended without a signing of the bilateral 123 Agreement.. Headlines typically noted that New Delhi accorded Secretary Rice the "red carpet" but "tied her in red tape" insisting that President Bush must first sign the enabling legislation into law. The GOI is reportedly waiting to see a statement accompanying President Bush's signature, which they hope will reinforce the commitments of reliable fuel supply contained in the 123 Agreement. Reports said although the Secretary did not express any regret, her delegation's disappointment was "palpable." Coverage also highlighted Secretary Rice's emphatic clarification that "the 123 is done" and that there are no "open issues." The President is expected sign the legislation approved by the Congress on October 8. End summary.

-- "RICE IS HERE BUT DEAL STILL NOT ON TABLE--INDIA RAISES 'LAST MINUTE' QUESTIONS ABOUT US RIDERS"

12. THE TIMES OF INDIA report said: "U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice traveled across the world for a celebration that was not to be. She was denied the last hurrah on the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal because of some 11th hour muscle-flexing by India." The paper said "India stopped short of signing the 123, indicating that it

preferred to wait for US President George Bush to sign it into law first" and it was "holding out because it expects President Bush to address the riders that have been introduced into the new bill."

The paper said "Sources said Rice was disappointed, especially because the U.S. State Department has been saying that the President's signature was not a prerequisite for Rice to do the honors in Delhi. Saturday's event could have been managed with more grace to avoid the "underwhelming" experience of a deal that both governments consider a triumph. To make Rice's last visit a little more memorable, Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh invited her to dinner, an honor normally reserved for heads of governments. Sources said it was Singh's way of thanking Rice for all the heavy lifting she has done for the deal, particularly before the approval from the NSG and U.S. Congress."

-- "DELHI GIVES RICE THE RED CARPET, TIES HER IN RED TAPE"

¶3. THE INDIAN EXPRESS report said: "Though Rice did not express any regret, her delegation's disappointment with India's refusal to sign before U.S. President Bush does, was palpable." The report also said Rice made clear that there were "no open issues" between India and the U.S. on the nuclear deal and that the President would sign the agreement into law very soon. She cleared the air about the 123 and the Hyde Act by saying "The Hyde Act is

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completely consistent with the 123 agreement... the 123 agreement is consistent with the Hyde Act and that the US would keep to its commitments to both".

-- "SHE CAME, SHE DISCUSSED, SHE COULDN'T SIGN"

¶4. HINDUSTAN TIMES Foreign Editor Amit Baruah in his report said: "It wasn't quite the Kodak moment it should have been" and that "With External affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee making it clear to visiting U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that President Bush must first sign an enabling Bill, sealing the 123 Agreement awaits another visit, another occasion." The report said Rice had informed Mukherjee that Bush would sign the enabling Bill next week and that "They have also invited Mr. Mukherjee to Washington to sign the 123" however disappointment among the American diplomats was evident and "one of them wondered why there should have been a Rice trip to India if the 123 was not going to be signed."

¶5. Baruah said "New Delhi is waiting to see a statement accompanying Bush's signature, which they hope will reinforce the many commitments of reliable fuel supply contained in the 123 Agreement".

-- "A HANDSHAKE YES BUT NO NUKE DEAL"

¶6. In a similar vein, MAIL TODAY said "Belying expectations, India and the U.S. did not sign their historic civilian nuclear agreement during the two day visit of U.S. Secretary of state Condoleezza Rice to New Delhi. While both sides called it a procedural delay, the Man Mohan Singh government seems to be awaiting fuel supply assurances from Washington before inking the pact".

-- "Nuke Deal: No Rice ceremony"

¶7. ASIAN AGE report said, " U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice could not sign the 123 agreement here but she made up for it by discussing the "next steps" in the India-US relationship, in areas such as collaboration in Afghanistan and defense". She was quoted saying "I

don't want anyone to think we have open issues" adding there were administrative details that needed to be worked out.

-- 123... BUT RICE LEAVES WITHOUT INKING DEAL

¶8. THE ECONOMIC TIMES report said " In yet another twist that mirrors the journey of the nuclear deal, India and the U.S. failed to sign the 123 agreement and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice left India empty handed". According to the report initially, New Delhi had hoped President Bush would sign the legislation into law on Friday so that the bilateral agreement could be signed between Mr. Mukherjee and Ms. Rice on Saturday afternoon. "When it became clear that this was not going to happen, the signing ceremony was put on hold".

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-- INDIA SHOULD SIGN THE N-DEAL IN DUE COURSE

¶9. MAIL TODAY editorial today said "The government has done the right thing by not hurrying into signing the 123 Agreement with the U.S. during Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's visit to New Delhi this week. As she herself pointed out, there are several administrative details that need to be worked out before India can come on board. For one thing the President has to receive the final version of the bill from the Congress to sign. Further, he is expected to make some important Presidential signing statements that will clarify how the administration views the legislation that has been passed.

¶10. The 123 Agreement that is to be signed is a perfectly good document for New Delhi to sign on. However, in passing it finally, the U.S. Congress has put some riders to the legislation which require clarification.

-- INDO-US RELATION CAN HELP IMPROVE AFGHANISTAN

¶11. THE ASIAN AGE report said "Afghanistan can be one of the many starting points for putting the India-United States partnership to use globally, according to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice." The paper said "Ms Rice's remarks come at a time when Washington is reviewing its strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan".

-- LEFT, ALLIES OBSERVE "BLACK DAY"

¶12. The pro-Leftist HINDU carried a five column report with a photograph of Left party leaders staging a protest march against the nuclear deal on Saturday. The report said activists were stopped midway and not allowed to reach Hyderabad House where U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was scheduled to hold discussions. The rally was addressed by several Left party leaders who said the deal would "impact India's sovereignty" and that "Ms Rice had assured the U.S. Congress that India would be barred from enrichment and reprocessing technology in the next NSG meeting to be held in November".

¶13. The report quoted Left party leaders as saying "It was worrisome that India was committing itself to buying a minimum of 10,000 MW worth of reactors from the "dying" U.S. nuclear industry that had not received any new orders for the last 30 years. They also demanded that the Central government convene a session of parliament to discuss the "adverse impact" of the deal on the country.

-- WE'RE ALL FOR STRATEGIC TIES WITH US: BJP TO RICE

¶14. "The BJP is all for India's strategic ties with USA, leader of the Opposition L K Advani stressed in his meeting with U.S. Secretary of state Condoleezza Rice."

THE INDIAN EXPRESS reported. Advani said his party wanted the deal to be passed but for the Hyde act as that "adversely impacts the country's nuclear program" which his party could not agree to.

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¶15. The BJP leader also raised the controversy surrounding Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi saying "He never applied for any visa and that he was an able and popular Chief Minister of a very important Indian state".

¶16. THE HINDUSTAN TIMES report said "BJP Leader L K Advani discussed the repeated denials of US visa to Narendra Modi and sought to know if it was proper on the part of the U.S. to deny visa to an elected Chief Minister". The report said Rice told her officials to furnish details about the State Department's statements on the issue.

¶17. Another report in THE HINDUSTAN TIMES said India hoped the Joint terror Mechanism between New Delhi and Islamabad will be made "more effective" and External Affairs Minister Mukherjee discussed the "growing militant threat to the civilian government in Pakistan" with Ms. Rice.

WHITE